

Kentucky Adult Education

Adult illiteracy is the fundamental barrier to every major challenge facing Kentucky, including early childhood education, education reform, economic development, and improving the health and well being of Kentucky's families and communities.

*Senate Bill 1,
The Kentucky Adult Education Act*

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The Kentucky Adult Education Act (Senate Bill 1), which passed unanimously in the 2000 legislative session, set the stage for remarkable improvements in the educational status of adult Kentuckians who lack a high school diploma, function at low levels of literacy, or want to learn the English language. SB 1 was the foundation for sweeping changes in adult education programs and a significant investment in Kentucky's future.

The Kentucky Adult Education Act also created a partnership between the Department for Adult Education and Literacy and the Council on Postsecondary Education by placing budget and policy development under CPE's purview. The partnership was strengthened in July 2003 when the Department moved from the Cabinet for Workforce Development to the Council on Postsecondary Education, and was renamed "Kentucky Adult Education." Governor Ernie Fletcher endorsed this structure when his 2004 reorganization maintained KYAE as a unit of the Council.

The Council and Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) developed Five Questions to guide implementation of Senate Bill 1. These questions, similar to those that steer postsecondary education reform, are:

1. Are more Kentuckians participating in adult education programs?
2. Are more adult education students meeting their educational goals?
3. Are more adult education students advancing on to postsecondary education?

Enrollment in adult education programs has grown 135 percent over the past four years, from 51,177 in fiscal year 2000 to 120,051 in fiscal year 2004.

4. Are more adult education students prepared for employment and the changing workforce?
5. Are Kentucky's communities and economy benefiting?

To measure the success of adult education and literacy programs, key indicators were developed to correspond with each of the Five Questions.

An Overview of Progress

Question 1: Are more Kentuckians participating in adult education programs?

Highlights:

- Enrollment in adult education programs has grown 135 percent over the past four years, from 51,177 in fiscal year 2000 to 120,051 in fiscal year 2004.
- Enrollment has increased in all segments of adult education – adult basic education, GED preparation, family literacy, workforce education, distance education, English as a second language, and corrections education.

Concerns:

- The 1997 Kentucky Adult Literacy Survey reported that nearly 1 million adults, 40 percent of the 2.4 million in the workforce, function at the two lowest levels of literacy. The 120,000 adult education enrollments in 2004 represent only 12 percent of this number.
- Although Kentucky's non-native population continues to grow, English as a Second Language enrollment has increased very little since 2001 – from 4,278 to 4,841.
- As family literacy programs were phased in across Kentucky, enrollment increased to 4,397 but is not yet meeting the need.

Question 2: Are more adult education students meeting their educational goals?

Highlights:

- In the past five years, 60,315 Kentuckians have earned a GED. In 2004, 9,740 Kentuckians earned a GED.

- Kentucky had the highest increase in the nation in the percent of adults with a high school credential from 1990-2000.
- The U.S. Department of Education holds states accountable for student progress toward meeting educational goals. KYAE is one of only three states to receive incentive funding for meeting or exceeding federal performance measures for the four years the system has been in existence. Among the performance measures are the percentages of students earning GEDs and advancing academically.

Concerns:

- According to the 2003 Current Population Survey, nearly one in five Kentuckians over age 25 do not have a high school diploma or GED, ranking Kentucky 39th in the nation.
- The number of GED graduates must be increased.

Question 3: Are more adult education students advancing on to postsecondary education?

Highlights:

- The college-going rate of GED graduates has increased from 12 percent in 1998 to 20 percent in 2001.
- Of GED graduates transitioning to postsecondary, 81 percent enrolled in a public two-year institution, 15 percent in a public four-year university; and five percent in an independent institution.

Concerns:

- The college participation rate of working-age Kentuckians is low compared to top-performing states.
- Too few adult education students take the ACT.
- The GED is not aligned with college standards.

Question 4: Are more adult education students prepared for employment and the changing workplace?

Highlights:

- Enrollment in workforce education has increased from 8,724 in 2000 to 51,388 in 2004.

According to the 2003 Current Population Survey, nearly one in five Kentuckians over age 25 do not have a high school diploma or GED, ranking Kentucky 39th in the nation.

- In 2004, employees benefiting from workforce education programs represented 996 employers in 100 Kentucky counties.
- In 2004, 784 Kentucky Employability Certificates (KEC) were issued to adult education students. The KEC, based on the ACT WorkKeys assessment, is a standardized credential that validates reading, math, and locating information skills for specific occupations.

Concerns:

- Too few employers and students take advantage of the benefits of the Kentucky Employability Certificate and the Kentucky Manufacturing Skills Standards Certificate.
- Adult education workforce initiatives need better coordination with postsecondary and state economic development initiatives.

Question 5: Are Kentucky's communities and economy benefiting?

Highlights:

- On average, individuals with a high school diploma or GED earn \$7,216 more a year in wages than adults without a high school education. The potential increased earnings for the 9,740 graduates in 2004 will be more than \$1.4 billion over a 20-year period.

Concerns:

- Too few Kentuckians earn GEDs.

The following pages document KYAE's implementation of Senate Bill 1 and its stewardship of the Commonwealth's investment in adult education.

Charting a Course

Establish a statewide mission for adult education and develop a 20-year strategy for raising the knowledge and skills of the state's population.

Senate Bill 1

In the fall of 2000, the Council approved an adult education strategic agenda and nine-point action plan to guide KYAE's work in fulfilling the charge

of Senate Bill 1. In creating this action plan, KYAE consulted and collaborated with approximately 20 agencies, organizations, and institutions. The plan was shaped on the premise that to leverage and maximize resources, all education initiatives should be assessable, accountable, and avoid duplication of services. The plan was updated in 2003, and adopted by the Council in early 2004. It encompasses adult education core services, family literacy, corrections education, distance learning, workforce education, professional development, and P-16. (<http://adulted.state.ky.us> -- click on About Adult Education.)

One of the most crucial components of both plans is the establishment of enrollment goals for the system as a whole and for individual counties that are based on a percentage of county residents at the two lowest literacy levels, according to the Kentucky Adult Literacy Survey. Not only have enrollment goals increased from a target of 60,000 enrollments in 2000-01 to 115,000 in 2004-05, but actual enrollments have exceeded goals each year the plan has been in place. KYAE officials believe that accountability at the county and state levels has been key to the system's progress.

Increasing Literacy Levels

Facilitate the development of strategies to increase knowledge and skills of adults in all counties by promoting the efficient and effective coordination of all available education and training resources.

Senate Bill 1

Adult education is offered through a diverse and comprehensive system, which includes sites in local school districts, community and technical colleges, community-based organizations, universities, correctional facilities, and cyberspace. One of the nation's preeminent adult education advocacy organizations recently praised the "astounding success" of Kentucky Adult Education, discovering what Kentuckians have known for a long time: the state's adult education programs work.

To build and sustain momentum in the adult education system, KYAE focuses on program support (core services, family literacy, corrections education) and system support (distance learning, state workforce education, professional development, and P-16). Other emphases have been on public information and recruitment campaigns, partnerships, transitioning students to postsecondary, tax credits, and tuition discounts.

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Core Services

Adult basic education, workforce education, English as a Second Language, and GED preparation make up core services of the Kentucky Adult Education System. Funding for core services is distributed to eligible organizations in every Kentucky county through grants. The Adult Education Act requires services to be targeted to communities with the greatest need; therefore, funding is based on the number of adults in each county functioning at low literacy levels.

GED Services - More than 60,000 Kentuckians earned GEDs between 2000 and 2004. KYAE staff members maintain a database of all GED graduates in Kentucky and administer the issuance of GED diplomas and transcripts, which are required by postsecondary institutions, the military, and many employers.

KYAE also monitors Kentucky's 50 GED testing centers to ensure compliance with national GED Testing Service (GEDTS) standards. GEDTS monitored all of Kentucky's GED test centers in 2002-04, and noted Kentucky's significant progress in compliance with standards.

English as a Second Language - KYAE provides English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction to nearly 5,000 individuals per year. Instructors focus on real-life needs of learners, including how to participate in a new cultural environment and how to communicate effectively in the workplace and community. Adult educators help learners who seek to pass the U.S. citizenship exams with instruction focusing on U.S. government and history, information about immigration and naturalization, and the rights, responsibilities and benefits of U.S. citizenship.

Alignment - To more adequately prepare adult students for postsecondary education and employment, KYAE is developing content standards and aligning its curriculum and assessments to rigorous postsecondary and workforce standards, as endorsed by the State P-16 Council and defined by the American Diploma Project.

Assessments - Kentuckians who enroll in adult education have varying levels of educational attainment – some cannot read or write, some do not have a high school diploma, some are high school graduates who need to upgrade their basic academic skills, and some need to learn English. People enroll in adult education with differing goals – to earn a GED, to help their chil-

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dren with homework, to score well on a promotional test at work, to enroll in postsecondary education, or to keep up with technology or skills to keep a job. Because of the wide variance of skills and needs, people who enroll in core services are given a standardized assessment to determine their academic level and to pinpoint where instruction is needed. The assessments also help adult educators determine which of the many curricula resources can best meet the individual's needs – GED preparation, WorkKeys, online learning, or another curriculum.

Family Literacy

Senate Bill 1 mandates that KYAE provide technical assistance in developing family literacy services. Family literacy programs are designed to break the intergenerational cycle of under-education by providing opportunities for parents and their children to learn together. The goals, as stipulated in the *Kentucky Adult Education Act*, are to provide parents with instruction in basic academic and employability skills; to provide parents with instruction/activities emphasizing parenting; to ensure that children have age-appropriate educational instruction; and to provide developmentally appropriate experiences that require interaction between parents and children.

KYAE implemented a family literacy expansion plan that phased in family literacy across the Commonwealth. As of 2003, all 120 counties offer family literacy as part of their adult education program. Kentucky is one of only two states with family literacy programs in every county. In addition, KYAE has:

- Increased participation in family literacy programs from 1,000 in FY2001 to 4,397 in FY2004.
- Collaborated with Head Start, Even Start, the local board of education preschool program, and other service providers for early childhood education, parenting, and the parent-and-child components, thereby leveraging funds rather than duplicating services.
- Required family literacy programs to meet enrollment and performance goals as a condition for funding.
- Co-funded the Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy (KIFL) at the National Center for Family Literacy to provide professional development and technical assistance to county programs. Since 2001, KIFL has made 315 visits to county adult education programs and provided 25 professional development trainings.

Evaluating Family Literacy - In June 2004, Thomas, Warren and Associates completed an external evaluation of Kentucky's family literacy program and issued a final report with findings and recommendations. The evaluation is

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available at <http://adulted.state.ky.us/Performance.htm>.

The study asserted that Kentucky “has been, and continues to be, a widely recognized supporter of family literacy services and exerts a strong national influence.” The report contained nine recommendations and numerous suggested actions for implementation, which were presented to adult education providers at regional meetings in August 2004. Based on the evaluation, KYAE is revising its family literacy performance indicators to focus on literacy and is aligning the child indicators to the Kentucky Department of Education early childhood standards. In addition, KIFL is using the evaluation as a foundation for professional development and technical assistance provided to adult educators.

Corrections Education

KYAE contracts with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System to provide corrections education for inmates in state prisons and uses federal funds to support adult education in 72 full-service local jails. In addition to GED preparation, instructional practices include strategies to help inmates acquire life and employability skills to become self-sufficient after leaving prison. KYAE provides adult education to nearly 7,000 inmates per year through a mix of state and federal funding.

Beginning in the 2004-05 fiscal year, county adult education programs with full-service jails in their counties are required to provide corrections education unless the jailer states in writing that education services are prohibited.

Distance Learning

The Kentucky Virtual Adult Education web site (www.kyvae.org) is the first of its kind in the nation. It provides adult students and instructors with anytime, anywhere access to curriculum, information, resources and services in an easy-to-use, motivational format. Adults can study for the GED, enhance job skills, or improve their English as long as they have access to a computer, the Internet, and e-mail.

As a resource hub for adult educators, Kentucky Virtual Adult Education provides more than 40 indexing, abstracting, and full-text databases with more than 5,000 journals and magazines. Online professional development courses make it possible for adult educators to learn new skills without disrupting service for students. Improved access, consistency, and efficiency are additional benefits of distance learning.

More than 11,332 adult students and 1,000 educators accessed kyvae.org in 2004 to meet their educational and professional development needs.

State-level Workforce Education

Assist providers with development of quality job-specific and workplace essential skills instruction for workers in business and industry, literacy and adult basic education, adult secondary education, including high school equivalency diploma preparation, the external diploma program, ESL, and family literacy programs, in cooperation with local business, labor, economic development, educational, employment, and service support entities.

Senate Bill 1

Kentucky must maintain and bolster the education system necessary for the undereducated adults to upgrade skills required for current and emerging jobs. Employers demand workers with strong reading and math skills, in addition to communication, problem solving and teamwork skills. An educated workforce is recognized as a key infrastructure component to successful economic development efforts. Kentucky Adult Education currently has several workforce-centered programs and initiatives that can help create and retain jobs for the Commonwealth.

Workforce Education Program - The Workforce Education Program stimulates workforce-focused partnerships among local, regional, and state agencies. The program is guided by the Workforce Alliance, a collaborative committee representing Kentucky Adult Education, Council on Postsecondary Education, Department for Workforce Investment, Kentucky Community and Technical College System, and the Cabinet for Economic Development. Its purpose is to leverage resources to maximize the number of adults and employers served. KYAE funds basic skills training for incumbent and prospective employees through the Workforce Alliance. Training may include reading, writing, computations, English as a second language, team building, problem solving, critical thinking, computer literacy and adult basic education/GED at the worksite. Since 2000, enrollment in workforce education programs has increased from 8,724 to 51,388 in 2004.

Competency-based Instruction and Certifications - KYAE adult education centers prepare adults to take the ACT WorkKeys assessment for the

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Kentucky Employability Certificate (KEC), a standardized credential that validates reading, math and locating information skills for specific occupations. KYAE programs also provide targeted instruction for the Kentucky Manufacturing Skills Standards assessment, which is based on the academic, employability and occupational skills identified by industry as necessary for manufacturing employment.

Project Excel - KYAE is leading the development of an Internet-based comprehensive database and repository to connect employers with Kentuckians with GED diplomas, certificates, licenses and degrees. This database also will provide aggregate data on the number of individuals with certificates, licenses and degrees in a variety of geographic and demographic presentations. The database is to be completed and operational by June 30, 2005.

Training for Health Care Employees - KYAE has developed a curriculum for entry-level health care employees that focuses on the problem-solving, math and communications skills necessary for improving employees' performance of routine job tasks.

SkillMobiles - Two KYAE SkillMobiles, state-of-the-art online training centers, are available to business and industry. The units feature a comprehensive selection of online curriculum, desktop computers, flat panel displays, printers and wireless Internet access.

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Professional Development

Assist adult educators to meet professional standards.

Senate Bill 1

In recognition that Kentucky's adult students deserve the same high-quality instruction as our children, KYAE has focused on improving adult education professional development. KYAE provides teaching instruction grounded in research; program improvement and support; development and dissemination of curricula; and linkages with postsecondary institutions.

More than 900 full- and part-time educators benefit from high-quality, research-based professional development in adult learning, technology, family literacy, leadership, quality improvement and English as a Second Language. Kentucky Adult Education offers classroom-style instruction as well as blended courses that combine face-to-face training with online assignments, plus online

courses via the Kentucky Virtual Adult Education Web site, www.kyvae.org.

The site enables KYAE to track educators' participation in professional development and enables instructors to interact with each other, and access the latest research, resources, lesson plans and best practices in adult education. KYVAE also provides the Kentucky Adult Education Resources Database, which includes curriculum guides, recommended reading, and lesson plans. The portal provides access to more than 30 databases where educators and their students can search for information published in journals and magazines, including full text articles from more than 5000 journals and magazines.

Kentucky Adult Education contracts with the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD) to offer the Kentucky Adult Educators Literacy Institute (KAELI), which provides training on in-depth reading and writing processes and investigates teaching and learning strategies that support the adult student. More than 144 adult educators have participated in KAELI, resulting in highly qualified master reading and writing teachers in every county adult education program. A similar institute for math instructors is planned.

The Adult Education Academy for Professional Development offers English as a Second Language workshops and a Leadership Institute. The ESL workshops are offered at various regions in the Commonwealth. The Leadership Institute trains program directors to apply concepts of continuous program improvement as outlined by the Baldrige framework.

The Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy (KIFL), National Center for Family Literacy, provides professional development, technical assistance, curriculum resources and policy coordination on family literacy.

KYAE and the Kentucky Association for Adult and Continuing Education host an annual state conference with multiple professional development sessions and networking opportunities for adult education providers.

KYAE hosts an annual GED Examiners Training conference to provide professional development of employees of GED testing centers statewide.

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Public Information and Recruitment Campaigns

Lead a statewide public information and marketing campaign to convey the critical nature of Kentucky's adult literacy challenge and to reach adults and employers with information about available education and training opportunities.

Senate Bill 1

Go Higher Kentucky

The Go Higher Kentucky campaign began in 2000 with two goals: 1) to increase Kentucky's participation and investment in education; and 2) to encourage Kentuckians of all ages, but especially undereducated adults from 16 to 64, to take the next step to advance their education level – be it learning to read or going to college.

The campaign works on several fronts. Statewide broadcast and print media deliver messages to the target audiences, who are encouraged to call the toll-free help line or visit the web for more information. At the grassroots level, the Go Higher community initiative engages educators, businesses, and civic leaders in local efforts to increase participation in adult and postsecondary education.

The campaign's first phase (May-August 2001) motivated undereducated adults to complete their GED and consider college. Highlights included radio and television ads, direct mail, posters, free testing, and GED educator rallies in Louisville and Lexington. The second phase focused more broadly on encouraging adults to upgrade their credentials and skills.

Ten counties were designated Go Higher communities. These areas received up to \$30,000 each to start local P-16 councils and conduct education needs assessments. A series of radio, affiliate television, and cable ads aimed at adults aired statewide from January-March 2002, and again from July-August 2003. Hundreds of news features and editorials appeared in newspapers and magazines. Information kits that highlighted the wide array of on-site training programs the state offers to improve workers' basic reading, math, and communication skills were disseminated to employers.

The third phase encouraged teens to attend and plan for college. A series of radio, affiliate television, and cable ads aimed at teens aired statewide from January-March 2002, and again in July-August 2003. Five career and college expos gave thousands of at-risk middle school students participating in the GEAR UP program a chance to visit a college campus and see the kinds of opportunities college makes possible. Advertisements appeared in the Lane Report's *Next* publication, distributed to all high school seniors in Kentucky.

The fourth phase of the campaign involved radio and cable and network television ads that aired for four weeks in August 2004. The ads featured the KYVAE call center toll-free number as well as the new GoHigherKy.org Web site address. Again, the focus of the campaign was on encouraging adults without a high school credential to earn a GED and go on to college.

The campaign played a significant role in producing the following adult education outcomes:

- Adult education enrollment records were set every year – 51,177 in 2000; 62,734 in 2001; 86,413 in 2002; 109,880 in 2003; and 120,051 in 2004. Enrollment since 2000 has escalated 135 percent.
- More than 60,000 Kentuckians earned GEDs from 2000-04.
- Adult education services to the business community have grown from 8,724 employees in 2000 to 51,388 in 2004.
- More GED graduates are transitioning to postsecondary education – from only 12 percent in 1998 to 20 percent in 2001.

Family Literacy Campaign

In conjunction with KYAE and the Kentucky Department for Education, the Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy conducted a marketing campaign focusing on the Commonwealth's family literacy programs. Between August 23 and September 17, 2004, Clear Channel radio stations across the state aired a 60-second family literacy radio spot three to four times daily. The ad ran during morning, noon and evening drive times on 85 stations for a total of 6,640 commercials during the campaign.

In addition to the broadcast campaign, KIFL provided all programs with a CD containing the radio spot as part of the recruitment toolkit for Kentucky family literacy programs. Each toolkit also included:

- A recruitment handbook
- Materials such as posters, bookmarks, postcards and brochures
- A recruitment calendar
- CD with sample PowerPoint presentations
- Certificates

Judicial Awareness

Create an awareness program in cooperation with the Administrative Office of the Courts to ensure that District and Circuit Court Judges are aware of the provisions of KRS 533.200 and the methods to access adult education and literacy programs for persons sentenced under the statute.

Senate Bill 1

KRS 533.200 provides that a person convicted of a misdemeanor, violation, or felon who has not received a graduation certificate from high school or who has not passed the GED may be sentenced to attend and successfully

complete a program designed to improve reading, living, and work skills.

In 2001, KYAE built awareness of alternative sentencing and adult education services through direct mail, newsletter articles, news releases and presentations at conferences. Efforts included:

- Articles in the Circuit Judges' and District Judges' newsletters, the Administrative Office of the Court's *Kentucky Law Related Education* (court-designated workers) and *Family Matters* (family courts) publications, Kentucky Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers' newsletter, Kentucky Bar Association's *Bench and Bar*, and the Department of Public Advocacy's *The Advocate*, summer and fall 2001.
- Article inserted in paychecks of prosecuting attorneys, September 2001.
- List of adult education providers inserted in the conference program for the Circuit Judges Judicial Conference in September 2001.
- Presentations by KYAE staff at the Circuit Judges Judicial Conference, September 2001; Domestic Relations Commissioners Training, August 2001; Kentucky Council on Crime and Delinquency Conference, September 2001.
- News release to Kentucky media.
- Request to adult education providers urging them to contact local court systems with information about adult education in their communities.

Transitioning to Postsecondary Education

KYAE funds college-going pilot projects with three comprehensive universities and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. The pilots are designed to increase the number of GED graduates entering postsecondary education, align goals with local P-16 councils and One-Stop Career Centers, help determine policy implications for the transitioning process, and create models that ensure success in postsecondary education.

The Council and KYAE are working to move more GED graduates to college, and the efforts are showing results. The GED college-going rate has increased from 12 percent in 1998 to 20 percent in 2001, the latest year for which data are available.

State Income Tax Credit and Tuition Discounts

Senate Bill 1 created a tax credit for employers and a tuition discount for employees as an incentive for the attainment of GEDs. The incentives provide tax credits up to \$1,250 to businesses that provide their employees a minimum

of five hours of paid release time to study for the GED. Qualifying GED recipients who complete the GED tests within one year are eligible for tuition discounts of up to \$250 per semester, up to four semesters in Kentucky's public postsecondary institutions.

While this innovative approach was believed to hold promise, neither employers nor adult students have taken advantage of the incentives. KYAE has made a substantial attempt to market the program, including the following efforts:

- Article in the Revenue Cabinet's *Tax Alert* newsletter and inserts in the Revenue Cabinet's quarterly mailings to employers.
- Article in the Kentucky Journal of Commerce and Industry newsletter.
- Multiple articles in the Cabinet for Workforce Development's newsletter distributed to 6,000 employers.
- Article in the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board newsletter distributed to employers and Local Workforce Investment Board members.
- Article in the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce newsletter.
- Article in *Kentucky Living* magazine.
- Article and flyers distributed to Labor Councils throughout Kentucky.
- Information mailed to 90,000 employers through the Department for Employment Services.
- Flyers distributed to visitors at the Kentucky State Fair.
- News release to Kentucky media, which resulted in an article picked up by the Associated Press and used statewide.
- Flyers and articles distributed to adult education programs statewide.
- Presentations to local Chamber of Commerce meetings and other civic groups by cabinet secretary.

To date, only one employer has taken advantage of the tax credits and no students have accessed the tuition discounts. The Council and KYAE are assessing the results to date and considering recommendations for possible modifications.

Funding Adult Education

Services shall be targeted to communities with the greatest need based on the number of adults at literacy levels I and II as defined by the 1997 Kentucky Adult Literacy Survey.

Senate Bill 1

The Council and KYAE are working to move more GED graduates to college, and the efforts are showing results. The GED college-going rate has increased from 12 percent in 1998 to 20 percent in 2001.

Prior to the passage of SB1, funding for adult education programs was based on a grant proposal process, with funding allocated based on the merit of the proposals submitted and the amount of funds available statewide. SB 1 increased the base funding for adult education programs and required KYAE to allocate funds based on need. To achieve equity in funding, a higher percentage of the additional state funds was applied to counties below the base. Additionally, enrollment and performance goals were established, and incentive funding was provided to programs meeting their goals. In this process, KYAE held the better-funded county programs harmless, while adding more money to the base for the programs that were less well funded.

While state and federal appropriations eroded due to budget reductions, it was not possible to bring the base to the level of the best-funded county programs. KYAE recognized that these funding levels had the potential to provide over-funded counties with an advantage in meeting enrollment and performance goals, which are calculated the same way for all programs. In March 2004, KYAE implemented a two-year plan to bring county programs to equity.

Research Activities

In 2000, KYAE funded a University of Kentucky report, *Reasonable Choices: Understanding Why Undereducated Adults Choose Not to Participate in Adult Education*. The report, which reflects research conducted exclusively in the rural parts of the state, found that:

- Adult education programs directly compete with everyday priorities including work, family, and community responsibilities in complex ways.
- Adult education is perceived by the public as GED preparation with the accompanying stigma of being “school-like.”
- The GED is often not considered an appropriate goal by undereducated adults and therefore not valued.
- Alternative forms of certification to the GED are desirable.

In the fall of 2001, KYAE expanded the rural research to include metropolitan sites. The results of this metropolitan research support the findings of the first study, particularly the point that alternative forms of certification to the GED are desirable.

KYAE contracted with the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (CAAL) for a case study on the partnership between adult education and community colleges. The CAAL report spotlighted the progress of adult education in Kentucky and focused on the “astounding success” of KYAE, CPE, and the

Kentucky Community and Technical College System.

“As a national model, the Kentucky system is fascinating and instructive in numerous ways,” noted Gail Spangenberg, president of CAAL, in the report’s foreword. The report singled out five examples of Kentucky’s innovations.

They include:

- An explicit statewide policy that provides a seamless system of transitions from adult education to postsecondary.
- A learner-centered and competency-based adult education program;
- A large investment in workforce education.
- Community college presidents who support adult education.
- An array of linkages between adult education and the community college systems.

In June 2004, Thomas, Warren and Associates completed an external evaluation of Kentucky’s family literacy program and issued a final report with findings and recommendations. More information about this evaluation is available in the Family Literacy section of this report.

A requirement of KYAE’s contract with the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development is evaluative research on the Kentucky Adult Educators Literacy Institute (KAELI) to determine the effectiveness of the delivery of course content, usefulness for the adult educator, and impact on outcomes for low literacy adults. Emergent findings are provided to KYAE, KAELI directors and collaborative partners as part of the process for reviewing and assessing KAELI.

Delivering Accountability

Establish standards for adult literacy and monitor progress in achieving the state’s adult literacy goals, including existing standards that may have been developed to meet requirements of federal law in conjunction with the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development.

Senate Bill 1

KYAE is accountable to the Council on Postsecondary Education and the U.S. Department of Education for meeting statewide performance indicators. Kentucky is one of only three states to have received federal Workforce Investment Act incentive funding, based on meeting performance measures, for the four years it has been available.

Kentucky is one of only three states to have received federal Workforce Investment Act incentive funding, based on meeting performance measures, for the four years it has been available.

In turn, KYAE holds county programs accountable for meeting enrollment and performance goals and bases performance incentive funding on these measures. To qualify for performance incentive funding, which is based on a percentage of a county's base level of funding, county programs must meet or exceed annual enrollment goals and at least 50 percent of the key indicators of performance. Programs not meeting enrollment and performance goals at acceptable levels develop a program improvement plan including timelines for achieving goals, subject to approval by KYAE. Failure to meet performance criteria may result in termination of contracts. KYAE's performance measures are the following:

1. Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, English language writing and speaking, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition and other literacy skills.
2. Placement in, retention in or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.
3. Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
4. Enrollment in adult education.

Performance levels for measures 1-3 are negotiated with the U.S. Department of Education on an annual basis.

Kentucky's web-based Adult Education Reporting and Information Network (AERIN) allows local programs to track the achievements of participants. It functions as a universal, seamless, performance-based workforce investment system that is responsive to the needs of adult students, providers and employers. AERIN data are shared with One-Stop centers, local workforce investment boards and students. Also, performance reports are posted on the KYAE web site quarterly and annually.

In addition to reviewing annual performance data, KYAE is engaged with adult education providers throughout the year in evaluating their programs and providing technical assistance. Descriptions of the various means of program evaluation follow.

Desk Audits

On an annual and ongoing basis, KYAE reviews each provider's enrollment and performance, which is evaluated according to federal performance indicators described above. Using the AERIN online data collection system, KYAE receives data on enrolled students directly from providers. Through AERIN, KYAE and providers can regularly evaluate program effectiveness.

At both the state and county level, AERIN provides the capacity to analyze program performance, identify program improvement needs, assess the effectiveness of program design and plan appropriate staff development to better serve adult learners. Local programs use program evaluations to do self-assessments, which contribute to an ongoing process of program improvement.

Based on data, Kentucky Adult Education links performance to program improvement efforts and funding decisions. Participant outcome data are crucial in creating a system responsive to learner and community needs. The data also serve as a basis for the state to identify and share information among practitioners concerning best practices.

Program Improvement

Using data from AERIN and program improvement and support policy, programs are determined to be in need of program improvement support. Recognizing that program improvement is impacted by many factors, the Instruction and Program Support staff have expertise in professional development, teacher quality, instructional effectiveness, curriculum assessment, program evaluation and technical assistance.

Programs that are deemed in need of program improvement are required to submit a Program Improvement Plan to Kentucky Adult Education. A performance improvement team is formed to provide individualized support to the local provider. Support provided by KYAE includes assistance with professional development, recruitment, record keeping, evaluation of instruction, links to other local partners, and other support based on individual needs.

The Instruction and Program Support staff also assists in disseminating information on best practices and developing programs that are committed to continuous improvement.

Performance and Financial Audits

KYAE annually conducts a comprehensive performance and financial audit of a minimum of 20 percent of Kentucky's adult education programs. The performance section of each audit includes reconciliation of student and faculty data; review for compliance with required professional development activities; and review for compliance with adult education policies and procedures.

The financial section of each audit includes a review of a sample of invoice records, verification of expenditures and a determination of compliance with allowable costs. The audit includes an examination of internal controls to determine whether proper accountability exists for the receipt and disbursement of funds and whether documentation and reporting are adequate.

